

## **SAMMY AWARD WINNERS FOR 2003**

### **Dean Swanson**

Dean Swanson has fished on the East Fork of the Lewis River for sixty years. Since 1970, he and his family have owned a 200-acre property along the river. As a witness to the decline of local salmon populations, Dean is keenly motivated to promote their recovery. When a recent Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife study showed that threatened chum salmon still spawn in sections of the East Fork, Dean encouraged Fish First to construct a chum channel on his property. Last fall, a month after the channel was completed, agency personnel identified evidence of spawning chum salmon. Now Dean is looking into building another channel on his property. In addition to being a good steward of his land, Dean is an active volunteer with several watershed groups and fish conservation groups. In addition to being a good steward of his land, Dean is an active volunteer with several watershed groups and fish conservation groups. He serves on Fish First's political action committee, occasionally visiting Olympia to speak out against practices that harm fish populations. With Dean as an ally, fish have a fighting chance of recovery in Clark County.

### **Kristen Wallway and Jim Comrada**

Having completed the county's Watershed Stewards program, Kristen Wallway and Jim Comrada are energetically putting their training to the test. They have organized a restoration project on Burnt Bridge Creek that involves replanting the north side of the creek, removing non-native vegetation, education the public, and building a walking trail. Jim, a trained horticulturist, developed plans for planting, and spent numerous evenings and weekends at the site identifying and marking existing native species. Working with local governments and community volunteers, Kristen has put together monthly work parties to plant or maintain vegetation. Jim was able to get Mabry work crews to help with planting on weekends. He has met with City of Vancouver officials to discuss future plans for the creek, and how best to protect and enhance fish habitat. Kristen would ultimately like to expand restoration as far upstream and downstream as possible. Thanks to Jim's and Kristen's dedication and enthusiasm, Burnt Bridge Creek will eventually become a more hospitable environment for salmon.

### **Gretchen Starke**

For more than twenty years, Gretchen Starke has lobbied tirelessly and consistently for clean water issues and the protection of salmon habitat. She belongs to numerous organizations that promote environmental stewardship and currently serves as conservation chair of the Vancouver Audubon Society. Although she takes a big picture approach toward environmental protection, advocating a cleaner environment for all species including humans, Gretchen is especially concerned with species that are listed under the Endangered Species Act. In newsletters and newspaper opinion pieces, she has underscored the importance of wetlands to aquifer recharge and healthy salmon habitat. She is currently helping to identify areas of critical habitat in the city of Vancouver and Clark County. Gretchen has been very involved in the county's Growth Management Act process, testifying in numerous hearings for critical areas habitat, forest practices, and shorelines protection. At one hearing, she testified "I am here because fish can't speak."

**Rick Haddock**

Rich Haddock is a catalyst and advocate for natural resource stewardship within Clark County's real estate and development industries. He actively seeks opportunities to encourage clients to restore habitat on their properties. For example, before one client subdivided and developed her property into five four-acre lots, Rick persuaded her to revegetate more than 40 percent of the 20-acre site into a natural riparian corridor. Rick and the property owner worked with Clark Public Utilities to remove blackberries and reed canary grass and plant thousands of trees. Neighbors who saw the restoration work were inspired to undertake their own restoration projects. Rick's concern for salmon recovery extends to his volunteer work. As a member of the county's ESA Advisory Committee, Rick's reasonable attitude has helped to foster consensus-building on potentially divisive issue. Rick is a businessman who demonstrates that good business decisions and natural resource decisions can go hand in hand, for the benefit of people and fish alike.

**Jack Mattson**

Jack Mattson's family homesteaded the Hockinson area in the late 1800s. Three years ago, Jack moved back to the family's homestead after retiring from the US Postal Service. He immediately set out to reverse some of the agricultural impacts of the past century. He cleared out about two acres of invasive English Ivy and blackberries on his own. He then contacted Clark Public Utilities, and together they developed a plan for restoring the riparian area along the section of Morgan Creek that flows through is property. Jack voluntarily ensured that more than two-thirds of his property—eleven acres total—will be permanently set aside as salmon and wildlife habitat. Americorps workers and corrections crews planted more than 8300 native trees, which will improve habitat for the coho, steelhead, and sea run cutthroat trout that already frequent his stretch of the stream. Jack continues to pull up renegade ivy starts, while planting additional native plants of his own choosing. The pride he takes in his property is good news for fish in Clark County.

**Gary Wade**

If you want to save salmon, you have to know how to save them. Gary Wade's limiting factors analysis is something of a fish recovery ho-to manual, used by just about every fish restoration group in Clark County. The Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board relies heavily on the Limiting Factors Analysis when it reviews project requests. Gary spent two years researching the factors that contribute to fish decline. His four-volume manual compares the way fish use habitat to the conditions found in Clark County, stream by stream. As habitat program coordinator for the Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board, Gary has secured state and federal funds for restoration projects in Clark County. He gives his all on the job, but still finds time to serve on Clark County's ESA Advisory Committee, advising the county on policy decisions that affect fish. He also serves on the city of Vancouver's Habitat Conservation Ordinance Committee, helping to protect fish and wildlife resources. Gary is unquestionably one of the heroes of salmon recovery in Clark County.

**Lewis and Clark Restoration Group**

A group of twelve students at Lewis and Clark Alternative High are working to restore riparian habitat along a section of Cougar Creek near the school. The students conceived of the project after previously monitoring water quality in the creek. They are the project's driving force, providing excitement, muscle, and ideas. The project focus is replacing invasive blackberry vines with native trees and shrubs. The students have learned about native and non-native plants, invasive plant removal techniques, restoration planning, and salmon habitat requirements. The plants will eventually establish a riparian buffer that will help control erosion, filter and slow surface runoff from nearby paved areas, and shade the stream, lowering its temperature for the benefit of salmon. The students want to see the plants thrive and are willing to maintain the plantings over the summer. Lewis & Clark teacher Tim Smith has noticed an increased sense of teamwork and cooperation among the students since the inception of the restoration project.

**Don and Marie Kulla**

For more than forty years, Don and Marie Kulla have been good stewards of their twenty-acre property, which includes a one-third mile stretch of Salmon Creek frontage. Several decades ago, long before it was fashionable, Don fenced off their livestock from a section of the creek. More recently, the Kullas chose to permanently sacrifice six acres of productive grazing land as part of a ten-acre habitat restoration project they undertook in partnership with Clark Public Utilities and a crew of Americorps workers. In the coming years, a forest of Oregon ash, Western red cedar, cottonwood, willow, and red-osier dogwood will stand where cattle once grazed amidst blackberry vines and reed canary grass. A side channel is now vegetated and will soon provide refuge for migrating salmon during high stream flows. Newly planted trees will eventually shade the stream bank and keep the water cool in summer. The Kullas have made a significant commitment to preserving prime floodplain and riparian habitat in the heart of a rapidly urbanizing area.

**Ann Smith**

Once a month, Ann Smith's 5<sup>th</sup> grade challenge class walks from Roosevelt Elementary School down to Burnt Bridge Creek to work in small groups and perform water quality tests, observe nature, write poetry, draw pictures, clear the area of litter, record data, and draw conclusions that they ultimately present to the annual Watershed Congress. The project focuses on community service and environmental stewardship. Ann applied for grants to purchase her own classroom equipment, including water quality kits, nets, and other testing materials. These enthusiastic students influence awareness of Burnt Bridge Creek conditions in their writings and in conversation with their parents, siblings, classmates, and others. In addition to the awards she has won as an educator, Ann frequently receives grateful letters from students who have been encouraged and inspired by her. You can be sure that many of her students will continue to influence the decisions that will affect the quality of our environment for people and fish.

## **CERTIFICATES OF MERIT**

### **Renee Fern**

For her ongoing commitment to the Salmon in the Classroom program, including the use of an enthusiastic group of parent, community, and student volunteers.

### **George Bryant**

For implementing an Integrated Pest Management Policy for the Vancouver School District to reduce pesticide use and improve the environment for people and fish.

### **Remy Johnson**

For dedicating much of his usable land to salmon and wildlife habitat through an extensive streamside restoration project.